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SUBJECT: THOUGHTS ON FINLAND AS I DEPART POST

Classified By: Ambassador Marilyn Ware, Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION: Upon my departure following two years of service as the US Ambassador to Finland, I would like to thank you and President Bush for having afforded me this tremendous opportunity. My team and I have worked hard to nurture and strengthen the US-Finnish bilateral relationship, actively enlisting Finnish support for the President's Freedom Agenda and for your own Transformational Diplomacy initiatives. I feel we have had great success in building bridges, not only on the government-to-government level, but also on the people-to-people level through our innovative and creative public diplomacy outreach. My greatest specific achievements have come in advancing the shared US-Finnish commitment to creating a more secure world and to fighting international extremism and terrorism; in increasing trade and investment and in finding solid common ground on the volatile issues of energy and climate change; in tapping into Finns' robust sense of internationalism; and in truly enhancing the Finnish public's understanding of US policies as well as its exposure to all the best that America -- and Americans -- have to offer. I leave Finland deeply honored by the experience of representing my country here and humbled by what I have learned from this great nation and its people. I offer this valedictory telegram as a means of summarizing briefly the progress we've made, but more importantly to outline some of the challenges, opportunities and hard work that lie ahead for my successors. END SUMMARY.

FINLAND: OUR GREAT NON-ALIGNED ALLY

12. (C) Finland did not become a member of NATO on my watch, and it will most likely not become a member until at least 2012 when President Halonen has left office, if at all. However, the US has no better friend outside the NATO Alliance, and the US-Finnish military-to-military relationship is arguably the single strongest bond we have in an already strong bilateral relationship. Despite its small size and nonaligned stance, the GoF is very proud of the fact that NATO -- rightly -- views Finland as a "security provider" and a valued partner. More importantly, Finns from across the political spectrum and throughout the general public remain extremely proud of their troops who are under NATO command in Kosovo and Afghanistan. I have worked very hard for the past two years to raise awareness of just how important Finland's continued commitment to those two operations is -- not just in terms of securing peace and

security for the Afghan and Kosovar people, but also in terms of defeating terrorism and protecting vital security interests in Finland, in Europe and in the US.

13. (SBU) Our diplomacy on this front has been focused and results-oriented, but also creative and "track two." For example, I am very proud of the traditional diplomacy we engaged in with senior Finnish officials that resulted in their offering their first OMLT for Afghanistan and their decision to become the second leading contributor to the EU Police Training mission there. I am also very pleased with US efforts across the board to support former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari's role as the UNSG's Special Envoy to Kosovo and to encourage Finland to continue its leadership role as a "framework nation" in KFOR. At the same time, I am just as proud of the delegation of Finnish women leaders I led on a USNATO Tour to Kosovo in Spring 2007. The public diplomacy these women themselves have subsequently engaged in on behalf of NATO's KFOR Mission has kept Finnish contributions strong, and public support for them equally robust.

#### ENLISTING FINLAND TO BUILD SECURITY

14. (C) Over the short- to medium-term, the US will have many opportunities to enlist even greater Finnish support for our transformational security priorities. Our national interests and foreign policy agendas overlap in many areas, but I believe our most important targets of opportunity remain the Balkans, Afghanistan and NATO cooperation. I have advanced these key issues into striking range, but it will fall to my successor to push the ball over the goal line.

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15. (SBU) THE BALKANS: Kosovo will remain Finland's highest foreign policy priority, at least until the security situation in the newly independent nation stabilizes and development initiatives and foreign investment begin to bear fruit. While some of our allies may be quick to declare success and turn their attention to crises elsewhere, we can count on Finland to retain its commitment to Kosovo over the long haul. Admittedly, this may hamper the GoF's ability to ramp up its military contributions in other areas, but Finland's long-standing relationship with Kosovo, its deep knowledge of the region, and key figures such as Ahtisaari who give Finland so much credibility will make that commitment something that continues to serve US interests. Having recognized Kosovo early, Finland will serve as a creative and pro-active member of the International Steering Group (ISG). Of equal importance, the GoF will use those tools to serve as a capable and honest broker as the EU, NATO and the rest of the international community begin the painful process of once again seeking to bring Serbia back from the brink and toward trans-Atlantic institutions.

16. (C) AFGHANISTAN: We have made great progress in our efforts to convince the GoF to do more in Afghanistan, especially in the area of humanitarian/development aid and training. We also have moved Finnish decision-makers a bit closer to taking PRT leadership at Mazar-al-Sharif. However, looking forward, what we now need is a significant increase in Finnish boots on the ground. There is little hope of convincing the GoF to send warfighters into the troubled regions of the south and east, but I do not believe this is Finland's greatest area of "value added." What we need to focus on is achieving a significant increase in the number of Finnish peacekeepers in the North, where they already have wealth of experience and a track record of nation building success. If the Finns take more of the burden in the North, this could free up others currently operating there who may be better prepared for actual combat. I

have focused my efforts over the past two years on building political will behind a proposal to increase Finland's contributions to NATO/ISAF from 100 to at least 1250. Such an increase will not occur in 2008, mainly because Kosovo (where Finland has 450 troops under NATO command) quite rightly remains the national peacekeeping priority. However, over the 2009-2011 timeframe, as Finland eventually draws down in Kosovo, Bosnia and elsewhere, I believe conditions will ripen for the GoF to make significant additions to its already-respectable 100-troop contribution in northern Afghanistan.

17. (C) THE NATO RESPONSE FORCE: We have gotten the GoF to the point where we are confident it will be among the first non-NATO allies to formally signal its intention to participate in the NRF. However, the road from this much-welcomed political statement of intention to actually bringing Finnish troops into an NRF rotation will be a long one. Those who follow me will need to build support in Parliament and the general public for Finland's NRF participation and help policymakers determine where Finland can offer the most 'value added' to the NRF. Perhaps ironically, some of the staunchest opponents to Finland's NRF participation are actually the greatest proponents of sending Finnish peacekeepers abroad -- they simply argue that Finland should not devote resources to having troops merely "at the ready" instead of actually on the ground in hotspots like Afghanistan, Chad or Kosovo. I have moved Finland to the point of reaching out to the NRF; it will fall to my successors to turn this show of political will into actual contributions.

#### FREEDOM AGENDA: NEW TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY

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18. (C) The USG and the GoF share the view that support for democracy, civil society and human rights in Russia and in Europe's new neighborhood is essential. Finland already complements US Freedom Agenda goals by providing support to NGOs and educational and cultural exchanges. GoF leaders have hosted high-level meetings with Belarusian opposition leaders, with Serb moderates, and with pro-democracy forces in Ukraine and the Caucasus. More importantly, the GoF recognizes the need to speak out on heavy-handed Russian trade practices, and senior Finnish officials have even begun mentioning the security challenge that resurgent Russia poses. We also

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see future possibilities, perhaps even in the Middle East or Iraq, although these are not areas of great Finnish expertise and they will require steady reassurances and guidance from us should they look to do more there.

19. (C) RUSSIA AND THE CAUCUSES: The Finns have a unique perspective that comes from having managed their difficult and at times dangerous neighbor with tremendous success since the end of WWII. That said, the Finnish default position will be one in which it actively seeks not to provoke the Russian bear. President Halonen, PM Vanhanen and FM Kanerva all offered no criticism of Russia's flawed Presidential election in March and hastily congratulated Medvedev. Halonen, in particular, can be expected to cultivate an especially close relationship with the new Russian boss, just as she did with Putin. Together, they will continue to address -- and resolve -- surprisingly parochial issues that experience has taught Halonen will not be resolved appropriately at the Russian bureaucratic level. Generally speaking, senior Finnish officials accept the prevailing view that more can be accomplished through a close relationship with Russia than through confrontation, and we should not expect this to change any time soon. Instead, rather than discourage how the Finns manage the Russian Bear, the US should continue to try to use the relationship to advance our interests. I have not sought to convince senior Finns to stand up

and shout at or criticize Russia publicly; rather, I have quietly tried to build their confidence to speak out when it is in their interest to do so. Part of the challenge has been finding the right tenor and tone. They showed during the Estonian Bronze Statue Crisis that they will speak out against bellicose Russian threats or actions, and I am increasingly confident that in the future they will do so more in cases when not just Finnish but also EU interests are at stake. It will be a long process, but undoubtedly the right Finnish instincts are there, albeit via a low key mechanism.

¶10. (C) My successors will be able to continue nudging Finnish leaders in the right direction by expressing appreciation for what Finland (and certain prominent Finns like Ahtisaari and EU Commissioner Olli Rehn) have done in relation to Russia; by encouraging greater US-EU and US-Finland coordination in dealing with Russia; by encouraging Finns to play an even more active role in showing public support for pro-democracy leaders; and by urging high-level Finnish visits to countries where they can reach out to democratic forces -- with Belarus, Ukraine and the Balkans being perhaps the best fits in this regard.

¶11. (C) IRAQ: Government officials, opinion leaders and public opinion remain critical of the US-led invasion of Iraq. That said, we have recently begun to see the subtle emergence of a sense -- especially within the GoF -- that despite lingering differences of opinion, the entire international community bears responsibility for helping Iraqis secure peace and rebuild the country. Finland began to act on this positive sentiment in 2005, when it provided some limited humanitarian funding to Iraqis (via the UN and the EU) and sent 12 police trainers to Jordan (under a State Department-funded law enforcement training project that ended in 2007). Since then, the GoF has identified no new Iraq initiatives, but I see opportunities in the areas of rule of law, reconstruction and human rights -- all areas where the GoF could make a difference despite its lack of regional expertise.

¶12. (C) The Finns' attitude toward a possible role in Iraq took a big step forward when I arranged the visit of General (ret) Jack Keane, one of the primary architects of the "Surge Strategy." Keane's presentations had enormous impact on decision-makers in the MOD and MFA, as well as among the public audiences he addressed. I believe Jack's messages helped reinforce to the Finns that we all bear responsibility for helping the Iraqi people secure their country and move forward; he also showed them the US is not above admitting mistakes, adjusting its strategies, and turning to its allies and friends for help. Actual Finnish boots on the ground alongside Coalition Forces will remain a political non-starter here. However, I think we have planted some small seeds that could, with further tending, lead Finland

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toward a small but positive role in Iraqi reconstruction.

COMMON GROUND: FINLAND'S CLIMATE AND ENERGY SUCCESS STORY

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¶13. (SBU) Because of its geography, climate, and natural-resource base, Finland has a long-standing interest in climate change and energy issues. I have used this interest to enlist Finland as a partner in moving the US-EU climate change dialogue away from an outdated debate on Kyoto to meaningful progress in curbing emissions worldwide. I worked behind the scenes during Finland's EU Presidency in the second half of 2006 to successfully get the Finns to assert themselves with the EU Commission to launch the inaugural High Level Dialogue (HLD) on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development. Two years later, the U.S. and

EU are participating in the Major Economies Process and in the UN Framework Convention negotiations, but I am proud of the fact that the HLD in Helsinki marked the first step in our post-Kyoto relationship with the EU and succeeded in recasting discussions in a way that maximized the synergies between the promotion of energy security, sustainable energy supply, innovation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. We have subsequently built on this progress by facilitating research collaboration to develop renewable fuels and promoting contacts between venture capitalists and the developers of new energy technology. We also continue to encourage Finland to be a useful partner within the EU context. This issue is here to stay, and I encourage my successor to continue to devote time and energy to nurturing the dialogue.

#### BUILDING ON AMCHAM AND OTHER BUSINESS SUCCESSES

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¶14. (SBU) Whether as a ripe market for U.S. products or a candidate to provide the kind of foreign direct investment that creates American jobs, Finland is a key partner for the U.S. During my tenure, we have seen impressive results as more and more American companies realize that Finland is one of the world's safest and least corrupt countries and provides an ideal gateway to Russia. I have highlighted this fact publicly numerous times, including on a successful trade mission across the U.S. in 2006, but also in many speeches throughout Finland. We have made measurable progress. The American Chamber of Commerce has doubled its membership since I arrived and is held up as a model for new AmCham chapters in the region. We have realized nearly 150 export successes during my tenure and have expanded our reach beyond Helsinki to establish key contacts in Finnish cities such as Oulu, which have proven of interest to Silicon Valley venture capitalists. Income for American affiliates operating in Finland broke all records last year. Finland stands at the center of the fastest growing region in Europe and my successor will have many opportunities to build on this success, but will also need to vigorously defend the importance of maintaining a Commercial attache in Helsinki as the Department of Commerce considers consolidating its operations and moving personnel elsewhere.

#### Building and Sustaining Public Diplomacy Momentum

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¶15. (U) The Embassy has engaged in truly creative public diplomacy initiatives during my time here. We sought to design programs that not only reached the widest range of Finnish audiences, but also utilized the diverse areas of expertise, backgrounds and interests of our own Embassy staff. We made good use of many of the traditional public diplomacy tools, including the IIP Speaker program, op-ed placements, television appearances, and lectures to students, business persons and many Finnish organizations. At the same time, I sought out unique and "less traditional" avenues for giving Finns a broader exposure and better understanding of America, its policies and its people. I brought Labor Secretary Elaine Chao to Finland; she was the first

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Cabinet-level visitor in 10 years. I also arranged a meeting between PM Vanhanen and VP Cheney which received significant press coverage.

#### Finland and Pennsylvania: A Historical Link

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¶16. (U) Examples of our PD success stories are many. They began with my effort to draw a key historical link

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between Finland and my home state of Pennsylvania. I did this by "bringing back" to Finland the story of John



Morton, a fourth-generation Finnish-American who joined Benjamin Franklin as part of the Pennsylvania Delegation and as a signer of the U.S. Declaration of Independence. Morton, in fact, cast the deciding vote in favor of American independence. I took his story to the far corners of Finland, including to the town in the western part of the country from which his ancestors began their journey to the US. Everywhere, Finns reacted with enthusiasm and pride when they learned of this direct link between their nation and a defining moment in US history. And Morton's story linking the US to Finland will live on here. Yet to come are seminars on both sides of the Atlantic -- one in Philadelphia and a subsequent one in Finland -- that will assemble scholars and researchers who will deliver papers and ultimately produce a book in both Finnish and English telling Morton's story. I have enlisted enthusiastic, high-level Finnish and American support for this project that links the history of both our great nations.

¶17. (U) Beyond the John Morton initiative, PD programs and grants have supported American studies and the discussion of the trans-Atlantic relationship. We have given grants to fund American studies seminars, performances by American musicians, and projects with the League of Finnish-American Societies such as Welcome to America (a guidebook to the US in Finnish) and a fold-out brochure in Finnish that gives a timeline of U.S. history for high school students. We provided support for a major Pixar exhibition at the Helsinki City Art Museum, which garnered considerable press coverage and general interest in American innovation and artistic excellence. Our officers have gone out to talk to schools, university and community organizations about the U.S. presidential elections and other aspects of America, such as our national parks. Indeed, as the word gets out that we are willing to come talk, the invitations to meet and give a speech have been increasing. My own speeches on Afghanistan, Kosovo and other topics have highlighted the need for a strong transatlantic relationship for addressing certain international problems together.

#### Public Support for Finland's Role in Afghanistan

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¶18. (U) We have had other PD successes as well. Through the great support of our Speakers Bureau in Washington and my own contacts, we have brought to Finland a range of Iraq, Afghanistan and Middle East experts to discuss the challenges of those regions, US policies there, and how Finland and the US could better cooperate. These included strategic thinkers and policy masterminds such as General Jack Keane, the architect of the successful Iraq "Surge" policy, and Professor John Alterman, a Middle East expert from CSIS. But they have also included other important voices, such as the American women entrepreneurs of Arzu, who gave up lives on Wall Street to help Afghan women start their own businesses, market their products at fair value, and create opportunities for their families. We hosted Connie Duckworth, a former Goldman Sachs executive and the founder of Arzu. Arzu has dedicated itself to providing economic self-reliance, education and health care to Afghan women through this sustainable carpet-making cottage industry. Afghan carpets woven by Arzu's weavers adorn walls in the offices of President Tarja Halonen and First Lady Laura Bush -- a touching symbol of the commitment Finns and Americans share in helping Afghan women rebuild their country.)

#### Seven City Outreach Program

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¶19. (U) A final, sustainable PD success I would like to highlight is an initiative we call our Seven Cities Outreach. Under this program, my team and I selected (originally) five key Finnish cities outside the Helsinki metro area and paired one willing officer with each. I charged the officers to establish personal relationships with mayors, universities, journalists, civic groups,

cultural leaders, chambers of commerce, local high schools, and other "locals" who had a key role in these cities. I joined the officers in traveling to their cities -- to introduce myself and the Embassy but also to formally introduce them to the officer who would be their Embassy point of contact. Our goal was two-fold: first, we sought

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the "outside the capital" perspectives of Finns from throughout this great country; and second, we sought proactively to create the PD opportunities that would allow us to provide a discussion of US policies and offer consistent American presence in each city. Our officers have become experts on their cities and know exactly which audiences to tap when I or a Washington visitor agrees to "go upcountry," and I myself traveled to an additional ten cities. Our results surprised even us: The program has expanded to seven cities; our quarterly visits are welcomed and anticipated by the broad base of new contacts we've built; and the PD targets of opportunity we've addressed with journalists, students and Finns from all walks of life span the length and breadth of US foreign policy objectives. Indeed, at least three different Finnish Ministers of Government have told me frankly that of all the initiatives the Embassy has undertaken over the past two years, this is the very best. My successors will no doubt chart their own courses in terms of PD priorities, and the range of effective means for engaging the Finnish public is limited only by one's own creativity and imagination. But if any initiative has the potential to expand and take on even greater life under new leadership, it is the Seven City Outreach, and I would urge those who follow me to help it grow and blossom in new directions.

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